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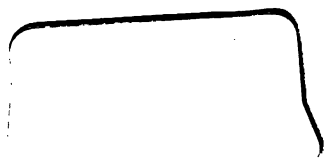
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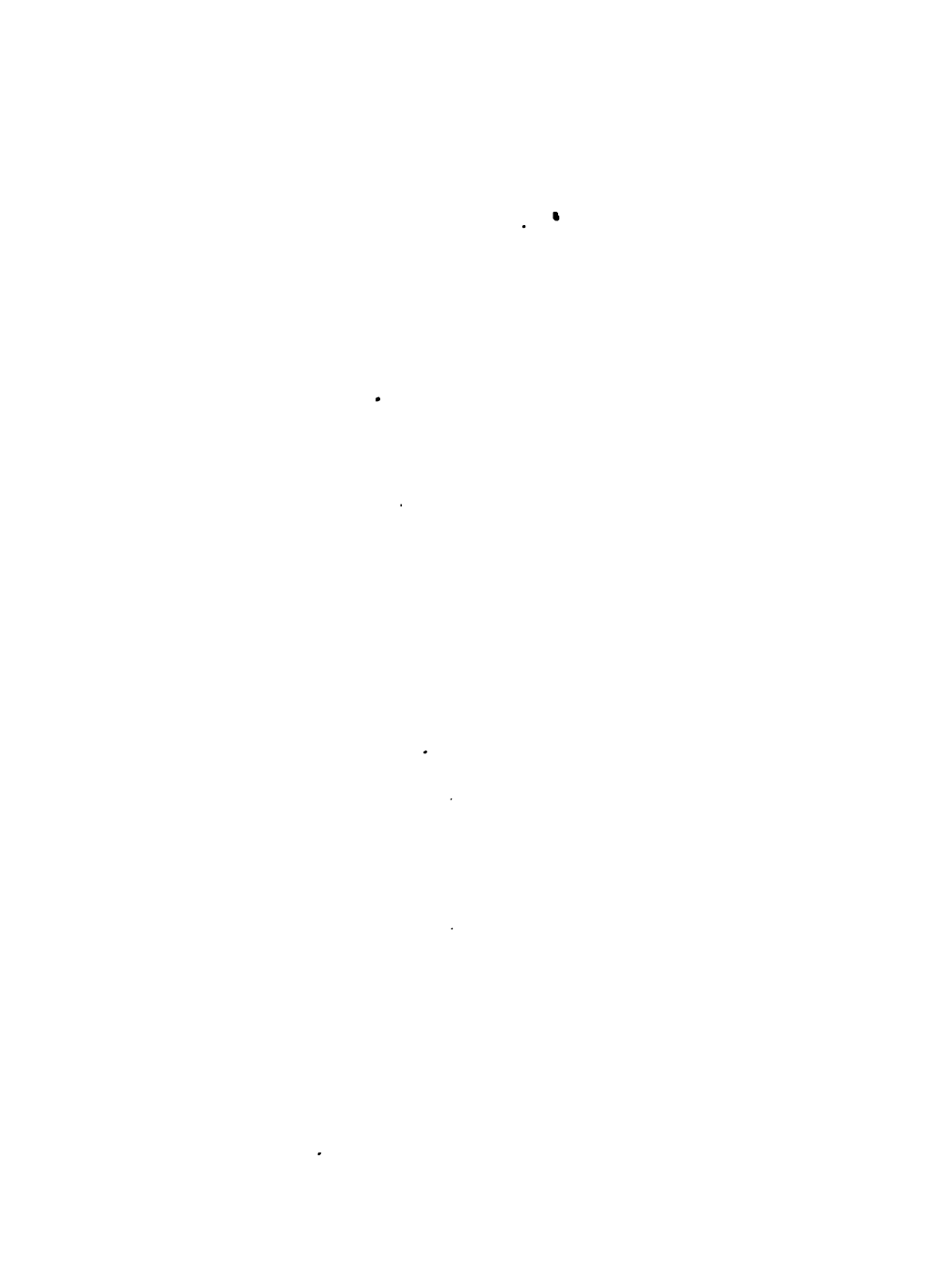
Catherine Hamilton



1487. f. 1940.







**CATHERINE HAMILTON.**



# CATHERINE HAMILTON :

*A Tale for Little Girls.*

BY

M. F. S.

AUTHOR OF "TOM'S CRUCIFIX, AND OTHER TALES."



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R. WASHBOURNE, 18 PATERNOSTER ROW.  
1874.





Dedicated

TO

NELLY AND DAISY.





# CATHERINE HAMILTON:

A TALE FOR LITTLE GIRLS.

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## CHAPTER I.

**Y**ES, it's quite true what they say! I'm naughty and tiresome, and disagreeable too; but I can't help it. If there was no one to tease me and no one to quarrel with me, I am quite sure I should be as good as possible. Mamma tells nice tales about the saints, and she says we must try to be like them; but I don't believe any saints ever had a boy like Frank to put them out of temper"—and then Catherine Hamilton gave another shake to her little self as she lay in the tall, long grass which grew

under the big trees down at the very end of their garden.

A strange figure she was—her sun-bonnet bent awry, her face all tear-stained, her muslin frock creased and crumpled. But this was a trifle compared to the state of things *inside*—the rage and passion which had been making such a storm in her heart when she rushed away from everybody and hid behind the shady trees, where there was no one to listen to her angry sobbing—except God; and Catherine wasn't thinking or caring much about *Him* just then ! Presently she heard a voice calling, "Catherine, Catty ; Kate, Kitty—here ; where are you ?" But she lay all the quieter amongst the long grass, so that no movement or rustle might betray her.

"Yes, he *may* call as long as he likes, but I sha'n't answer. He wants me for something, and so he thinks it's easy to make it up; but I *won't*. And I'll not go in either ! I'll lie here till it's quite evening and dusk, and they'll be looking for me, and fancy I'm lost ;

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then every one will be frightened and sorry. I shouldn't wonder if I took cold too—it gets so damp here after sunset; and perhaps I shall be ill, and lie in bed, and have the doctor; and Frank will be ever so sorry for teasing me then, and——” but there Catherine's ideas of revenge were cut short by another voice reaching her, the voice of the very last person in all the world she would like to see just then, namely, Father Austen, their parish priest, who was evidently walking round the garden in conversation with Mrs. Hamilton. Strangely enough, they sat down on a bench quite near to the little girl's hiding-place, and Catherine's attention was roused by hearing her own name.

“Catherine is nearly eleven years old, certainly,” her mamma was saying. “It is time she made her First Communion; but I am almost afraid of her doing so just yet, until I see her trying more to control her hasty temper.”

“I think she means to try very much,”

Father Austen answered. "She has a violent, passionate nature, but God's grace will overcome all that. I am sure Catherine has many good qualities: she is truthful and straightforward——" but anything more the priest had to say was checked by the sudden appearance of the little subject of his thoughts, who rose up out of her hiding-place, and, walking to the bench, exclaimed, "Please, I was lying in the grass, and I heard what you were saying."

"*Catherine!* you here!" exclaimed Mrs. Hamilton. "Such a figure, too, and your eyes red and your face so dirty. What have you been doing?"

"Frank teased me, and—and—we quarrelled," said Catherine, stammering very much.

"The old tale, Father Austen, you see. I do not know how it is, but Frank and Catherine can never agree five minutes together."

The priest held out his hand and drew *the little girl* to a place by his side. "Is

this what comes of all the promises you make me, my child?" he said. "Have you not told me you would try by God's help to curb your temper and be more patient and forgiving?"

Catherine drooped her head very low, but said nothing.

"You say you heard us speaking of you, Catherine, and you did very right in getting up and letting us know you were there. Well, then, you heard that we were talking of your First Communion."

This time there was a very low "yes" from under the bent sun-bonnet, and then Mrs. Hamilton walked away, thinking that Father Austen would perhaps bring Catherine to a happier state of mind.

"Surely you would like to receive Our Lord, my child; other little girls of your age are preparing; and will you let your passion and temper keep you from this grace?"

Catherine began to cry, but it wasn't



angry crying this time—she was beginning to feel so very, very sorry.

“I *can't* be good if Frank teases me so,” she said.

“I dare say it is very hard, but do you try as much as you can, and if you are so unfortunate as to get angry, are you ready to forgive him quickly, Catherine?”

Surely Father Austen did not know the thoughts which had been in her heart as she lay under the trees—Catherine began to feel more and more uncomfortable.

“I **am** very sorry now,” she answered. “I’d say I wouldn’t do it again, but it’s no use ; I dare say I shall be just as bad the next time he torments me.”

“Not if you are on your guard, and if you ask God and Our Lady to help you to keep back the angry words, Catherine. I’m afraid you forget this sometimes, do you not?”

“Yes ; I only think of it after, and then *it's no use*,” she said.

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“Yes it is—you must not give up trying in that way, Catherine. You have failed this morning, I am quite sure; but you must resolve again and ask God’s help, and you will conquer yourself at last.”

“It takes so long, Father,” murmured the little girl.

“Yes, it is long and troublesome and hard to learn to be good, but we must all do it if we mean to belong to God at all. You do want to be a good child, do you not, Catherine?”

“Yes, I do,” said Catherine, frankly. “But I do wish it was easy.”

Father Austen smiled. “That is a useless wish, my child—don’t keep it in your mind. It never will be easy, and God has not said it will. But He *has* said that He will not leave us to try alone, and that if we persevere we shall overcome our sinful nature at last by His grace. So you must begin again, Catherine; and if you are allowed to prepare for your First Communion, will that be a help to you?”

Catherine's eyes sparkled. "Oh yes, I should like it so—I *will* try to be better, and to give up quarrelling with Frank, and going into these tempers, if you will persuade mamma to say yes, Father Aasten."

"She does not want persuading, she wishes it so much, my child. Your mamma is only anxious to know you are really desiring to please God; and as she has left me to decide, I will tell her that I think you may get ready to receive Our Lord about the time of the Feast of the Assumption."

"Oh, thank you so much, Father. You will see I shall be quite different now." And Catherine darted off to the house, to tell every one in it the good news, leaving Father Austen to find her mamma and finish his talk with her.

But Catherine did not find just the sympathy with her pleasure which she desired. Nurse—who had been with them a long time—took the opportunity of pointing out her *faults* in a manner which was not compli-

mentary; and Frank whistled, and exclaimed, "My goodness!—you'll have to give up being such a vixen;" and so at last Catherine went away to her own little room, and began to cry once more because nobody cared that she was happy, no one seemed pleased that she was going to prepare for her First Communion! But in the midst of these sorrowful thoughts she heard her mamma coming; and then Catherine was soon in her arms, knowing there *was* some one who cared very much indeed about her happiness.

"You will try to prepare, darling?" said Mrs. Hamilton. "Surely this will be a fresh beginning, and you will fight bravely against your temper during these few weeks, so that you may prove to Our Lord how much you want Him to come to you."

"I will, indeed I will, mamma," said Catherine. "Father Austen says I must pray more to God and Our Lady, and I mean to. I do want to be better, and perhaps I shall after I have made my First Communion."

“ Indeed I hope so—it would be sad if you remained exactly the same child you have been before. But you will always have to *try*, Catherine—no one ever was or ever will be good without a great deal of trying.”

Catherine sighed—that was just the hard thing to her, the trouble of struggling against her faults. If there had been *one* troublesome thing to do, *one* great pain or difficulty to get over, and then nothing more, I am quite sure Catherine would have been as good as one of the saints she loved to hear of: it was the daily trying, the constant failures, the “bother” (as she called it) of persevering always, which seemed more than she was ready to bear for the sake of pleasing God. However, for one week she got on finely: she rose when she was called, she tried to give more thought to her prayers, obeyed so much more cheerfully, and had such unusual patience with her brother, that all in the house observed the change, and Catherine was quite *conscious* of it herself, and unfortunately

began to think it was easier than she supposed, and there was no longer any need to try quite so much to be good. I need scarcely say that as soon as Catherine let this thought rest in her mind she began to fall back into many little faults, and at last she broke out into one of her worst tempers—and all about a trifling matter, too. One morning she was very cross at getting up—I don't think she could have said why, but so it was, and she took the uncomfortable feeling down to breakfast with her, and spoke sharply to every one. Then it was time for lessons, and when the governess came to teach her, Catherine had been idling about so that her books were not ready, and perhaps this made Miss Meredith "cross," as she called it: at any rate, nothing went well that morning, bad marks came thick and fast, lessons were returned to be learned over again, and at twelve o'clock Catherine found herself with a great deal still to do and very little patience to do it with. Hardly had Miss Meredith gone than

Mrs. Hamilton came in. "Why are you not practising, Catherine — this is the proper time, is it not?"

"I can't; I've not done my lessons," said the little girl in a very disagreeable voice.

"You must do your lessons in the afternoon, then, instead of amusing yourself. Go to your music now."

Catherine dared not disobey, but she closed the door with such a bang that her mamma called her back to shut it properly, and when she did go to the piano, she thumped the notes as if they had done something to displease her. To make things worse, Frank put his head in at the door, and, pulling a hideous grimace, began to sing, and whistle, and interfere with Catherine's performance in a way which roused her to a perfect fury. "You tiresome boy! how dare you come and put me out like that! I'll tell mamma, I will — I will!" screamed Catherine; upon which Frank, in no way alarmed, danced round her, as she tried to escape from the

room, shouting a schoolboy rhyme which, beginning with the words, "Tell-tale tit," was in no way calculated to cool her feelings.

"Let me pass, Frank! How dare you! how dare you!" she screamed; and then, without a moment's thought, she struck him so violently on the face that he raised his hands to it, and so gave her the opportunity of getting past him and rushing to her room, where she locked the door. Then Catherine threw herself on her bed and cried bitterly—first with temper, but after a little while from the greatest sorrow.

This, then, was the end of her trying—not quite a week since she had made so many promises—so many resolves,—and now they were all come to nothing but failure! The great clock on the stairs struck one—Catherine knew it was time to get up and wash the marks of tears from her face and smooth her hair, which she had rolled about on the bed until it stuck up quite wildly; but she did not like the thought of going



downstairs: perhaps Frank would begin laughing at her again; perhaps he had told his mamma of her; at any rate, she should never be able to get her face right enough to escape being questioned: and then Catherine could imagine Mrs. Hamilton's look of disappointment, and how she would say, "Is this the way you get ready for your First Communion?"

All these thoughts passed through the little girl's mind, and when the clock struck the half-hour she had not moved, but lay listening to the sounds in the house. It was nearly dinner-time now—would no one come to call her, or to see if anything was the matter? How unkind! Well, no one cared what happened to her. There was cherry-pudding for dinner, too—Catherine had coaxed that secret out of the cook soon after breakfast, and she liked cherry-pudding so *very* much. Frank would enjoy it just the same without her; he wouldn't think how miserable *she was up there* alone by herself, feeling

so sorry, and so ashamed, and so desperately hungry! But Catherine was not quite fair to Frank in these thoughts, for at that very time he was searching for her all about the garden, and very soon she heard his voice calling her on the stairs. "I won't answer—I'll lie here and go without any dinner"—that was the first idea; but the recollection of the cherry-pudding came in to alter her mind, and something better followed and caused Catherine to open her door about an inch and say quite gently, "I'm here, Frank."

"I say, old girl, it's dinner—you'd best look sharp and come down. My! how you've been crying!"

"Are my eyes so very red, Frank?" exclaimed Catherine, running to the glass. "Oh dear yes! What will mamma say? I can't come down; indeed I can't,—and yet I'm so very, very hungry."

Frank whistled. "I'm sorry I teased you, Kitty—but you were awfully waxy, you know."

"Yes, I know; it was all my fault — it always is. I shall never get any better — never."

"Oh, come now, that's gammon. You've been as good-tempered as anything for all these days. It was my fault, I dare say."

"No," said Catherine, still more disconsolately; "I got up cross, and I've been cross all day. Oh dear! I wonder if they'll let me make my First Communion now! Did you tell mamma, Frank?"

"Tell her? No, I'm not such a sneak as all that comes to. There, it's all right now, Cathy, and we're jolly good friends. Come, just give your hair a touch with the comb, and I'll cut down and say you're coming." And Frank was off; but in less than a second he reappeared. "I say, Cathy, are you getting ready? There's *such* a cherry-pudding! Come, look sharp, I tell you."

"Yes — yes!" cried Catherine, rushing about frantically for brush and comb and cold water; "I'll come as quick as ever

I can." She did, too; and for once Mrs. Hamilton appeared not to notice her being after time, or even see the redness of her eyes. The fact was, she knew there had been an upset between the children, and she was waiting to see if Catherine would speak to her about it.





## CHAPTER II.


**M**AMMA," Catherine said that evening, "I have something to tell you." They were sitting out in the garden then, enjoying the breeze which had sprung up at sunset. The birds were chirping in the trees above their heads; there were lovely flowers to look at; and all was quiet and calm—so quiet that it made little Catherine fancy God and heaven seemed nearer to her than they ever were in the day. They could hear in the distance the merry voices of a party of schoolboys over a game of cricket; and as she recognised Frank's ringing laugh, she roused up from her happy dreaming thoughts with a deep sigh, remembering

their quarrel, and how very badly she had behaved in the morning of that day, and what an exceedingly disagreeable tale there was to tell her mamma.

If Catherine had been less truthful and candid, I dare say she would have kept it to herself. She had made it right with Frank, she had asked God's pardon, she had resolved with His help to begin afresh; but yet she felt that she had not done all until she had owned her fault to her mamma.

"Well, Cathy, what have you to tell? Something very pleasant, I hope: lessons done well, practising gone through carefully \_\_\_\_\_"

"Oh, mamma, you know—*you know* it wasn't. I began by being cross, I can't tell how, and I can't tell why, but it kept getting worse, and all my lessons were turned back, and I was sulky, and wouldn't say 'good-morning' to Miss Meredith when she went away, and I spoke rudely to you, and banged the door, mamma, you know, and then I



thumped on the piano as loud as I could, and did not take pains at all."

"It was certainly an unfortunate morning, Catherine; still, I hope you are going to make up for it to-morrow. I cannot expect you to grow perfect so quickly."

"Ah, but the worst is to come, mamma. Frank came in and teased me, and laughed at my playing, and I got very angry—quite in a rage, mamma—and I—I—I—struck him."

There was a dreadful silence then. The truth was out, and Catherine was glad of it; but she felt as if she dared not look up to see the expression of her mamma's face.

"Shall you say I mustn't make my First Communion, mamma?" she ventured to ask at last.

"No, indeed, Catherine, I think you need our dear Lord to come into your heart, and help you to conquer that violent temper. I am very, very sorry, dear. I cannot make light of your fault, for it must have been very



displeasing to God; but while I see you resolved to try hard, and when you own what you have done, I can but forgive you that which our Lord Himself is so ready to pardon. I am sure you are really sorry, Catherine."

"Indeed I am—I mean to try very hard, mamma; and Father Austen says I shall grow better by-and-by if I pray a great deal for God's grace to help me." Just then Frank rushed up in his brilliant-coloured cricketing shirt. "You are a muff, Kitty, to sit moping there instead of coming to watch us fellows play. Can't you take a look at us, mamma?"

A cloud passed over Catherine's face for just a moment—it had been so happy to sit quietly there and talk, and now Frank must needs come bothering about his stupid cricket; but as the thought rose she checked it, and all the shadow passed from her face as she got up and said, "I'll come and look, Frank: please, mamma, come too."

Poor little Catherine!—the history of that first week was much the same as the history of a good many more—tears and repentance, promises and resolutions, victories and failures, very, very often; and yet she was sincerely trying to be good, and God and the Blessed Virgin were looking down with joy and patience upon those days of real effort to overcome herself. July was over now; week by week Catherine and several other children were receiving instruction ready for the great day which was drawing on, and scarcely anything else was spoken of in the Hamiltons' home but the Feast of the Assumption. One of the other children was a friend of Catherine's, but the rest were poor girls from the parish school, and to prevent any feelings of vanity in either of their little daughters, Mrs. Hamilton and Mrs. Leslie decided to supply them all with dresses exactly alike, as neat and simple as they could procure.

“What are you going to wear, Mary?”

asked one of little Miss Leslie's companions ; and when she heard that the two young ladies and the four poor girls were to have the same white muslin frocks and veils, Flora Marshall tossed her head scornfully. " Well, I'm sure ! How strange it will look ! When my sister made her First Communion she wore a beautiful silk dress, and a veil which cost ever so much ; and I shall do the same, and so will Rose."

Mary Leslie and Catherine Hamilton talked that speech over in one of their walks round the garden.

" I wonder why our mammas don't make a fuss about our dress, Cathy," said Mary,— " most people do, you know ; and Flora Marshall says her sister had silk and lace, and she and Rose will have it too."

" My papa is as rich as Mr. Marshall, and he can buy me silk and lace too if he likes," answered Catherine proudly. " It's not because our mammas mind the money ; it's because they don't think it a right time

to make such a show. You shouldn't talk to Flora; she is a stuck-up, conceited girl, and I can't bear her, Mary." The words were scarcely out before Catherine went crimson with the shame she felt for having spoken or even thought them. What pride, what anger to come from a heart which would so soon receive the meek and humble Jesus!

"I *ought* to say I was wrong—Mary will think it over and perhaps get harm from me. I am the oldest, and I've given her a bad example." So said conscience.

Then pride had a word to say. "Oh, never mind humbling yourself to Mary—it's no business of hers. You need only humble yourself before God when you go to confession."

But, fortunately, Catherine was not the child to shrink from owning her faults. "I'm sorry I said it, Mary," she exclaimed. "It is I who am conceited if I boast like that. I am not fit to make my First Communion at all, I do believe."

Mary hardly knew what to answer. "Well, I suppose I ought not to have told you what Flora said. You see, we were beginning to talk about our dress, and that was the wrong. We won't do it again, though. And it shows that our mammas are right, doesn't it, Cathy? for if they made a great fuss about what we were to put on, we should be just as vain as any one else."

"Yes," sighed Catherine. She was naturally of a less hopeful nature than Mary Leslie, and was rather more inclined to believe herself past all improvement than to agree simply "not to do it again."

However, at last all the hopes and fears and difficulties were over, and the bright sunshine streamed in upon the pretty church on the morning of the 15th August, lighting up the fresh childish faces of the little first communicants. But perhaps none of the six prayed as Catherine Hamilton prayed, or felt as she felt when she went back to her place with happy tears in her eyes. Yes, Jesus had

come at last; all about and around and within her was His holiness, His purity, His meekness; surely, then, some little of that sweetness of spirit would come to her; and in spite of her sinfulness, in spite of her weakness, Catherine believed then, as she had never done before, that the dear Saviour of little children would bless and help her to be good.

“ Ah, mamma, it has been so happy,” she said at night when she was going to bed; “ it seems like no other day I ever had or ever shall have any more.”

“ It is indeed so, darling—there can never be anything exactly the same as a First Communion; but I hope it is only the beginning of a great many graces and joys which will come to you. Our Lord will rest in your heart again, Catherine, many and many a time, I trust, before you die. Try and keep it for Him, dear; try and drive out all that could grieve Him; and give Him all your love in return for His goodness to you.”

"I want to do it; I want to be good. Oh, mamma, how dreadful it will be if I am just as naughty as I have been before!"

"You will have to watch, and strive, and pray, Cathy. I cannot tell you that you will never fall, but I can say that I am *sure* Our Lord will always take you back again when you come to Him in sorrow for your sins. And now good-night, dear." And then Mrs. Hamilton went away, and Catherine was left to her own happy, peaceful thoughts until she dropped asleep.

Perhaps now you have heard so much about this little girl, you will like to know what her home was, and how many brothers and sisters she had. Well, then, to begin, the house was called "Fairfield," and it stood in the midst of a large garden, where the children played nearly all day long in summer. There were many pleasant walks round, for that part of the country was so pretty with hills and dales, apple orchards and cherry orchards, and glimpses here and there

of the river. There was a wood near, too, where thick moss grew at the foot of the old trees, and there were quantities of wild flowers, and squirrels running about, and blue dragon-flies darting here and there, and large gay butterflies—a splendid wood for picnics and pleasure. The house at Fairfield was large and old-fashioned, and from the windows they could see the little church and Father Austen's house, besides a view of the fields round for many a mile. The rooms were square and oak-panelled, with deep window-seats; but the only one I am going to describe to you is the nursery. There were in it, of course, chairs and a table; Catherine's own hanging book-shelf, with her favourite bright-coloured volumes; a huge rocking-horse with its tail gone; and a doll's house, which was handed over now to little Winifred, who was only six years old. Frank had left the nursery long and long before, and Catherine was only there for a little while in play-hours, because being so nearly eleven



years of age she was growing more a companion to her mamma every day ; but still she liked the old room, perhaps, better than any other, and could play as merrily as Winifred when she was in a good humour. Nurse had been at Fairfield since the time of Frank's birth, and now, though she had only Winnie and little four-year-old Cyril under her especial charge, she never could quite remember that Frank and Catherine were no longer the tiny children she had once nursed, and so she often treated them in a manner which was very ruffling to their temper, and sometimes led to disagreeable results. Still, no one would have been more sorry than the two elder children if old nurse had left Fairfield, although she was so precise and fussy, and sometimes so exceedingly cross to them.

Frank went to school near by, so that he could return home each day ; and Catherine had a governess for three hours every morning, whom you have already heard of, so

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now you will be able to picture her home and those who lived there with her. She had many little girls who were her companions, but no one whom she loved like Mary Leslie; and now they were closer friends than ever, and had confided to each other all their plans for being good and beginning a new kind of life from that memorable 15th of August which they felt ought to make them such changed children.





### CHAPTER III.

**I**F it is hard to begin to practice good resolutions, it is still more difficult to persevere in them when we get a little tired of taking so much pains—at any rate, Catherine Hamilton found it so, and even when she was doing her best to be good, her tendency to get into mischief was always bringing trouble upon her. Half of the skirmishes with nurse arose from her carelessness or untidiness; and then there were complaints on one side and cross words on the other, even if the little girl managed to keep out of a downright fit of temper. But at the beginning of September, just when Catherine was getting a little weary of trying

so hard to control herself, she had something new and very pleasant to think of and a good deal to do; and this was the greatest help to her, for generally her naughtiness grew out of idleness, like it does with most other people. I think it was only the first week in September when Catherine Hamilton appeared at Mrs. Leslie's door asking for Mary, with such an important look on her face that even the servant who let her in wondered what was going to happen.

"Mary, I've something to tell you," she said, when the two little friends were safely closeted together. "It's a very great secret. Will you promise not to tell any one until I give you leave?"

Mary promised faithfully. "Not even Fanny Fletcher, or Flora, or any one else you play with?"

Again Mary assured Catherine of her strict secrecy.

"Well, then, I'll tell you. In two weeks *mamma* is going to give a treat to all the

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school-children ;—*there !*” And Catherine, who had brought out her news very slowly and distinctly, looked in her companion’s face to see the impression she had made, and was considerably disappointed to find there an unmistakable expression of vexation, instead of the pleasure she had expected.

“Is that all?” said Mary. “I thought it was a *real* secret—that isn’t anything so very wonderful after all.”

Catherine looked indignant. “Well, I’m sure, Mary! I should have thought you would like to hear that the children are going to have so much pleasure, and I wanted you to help me make some presents for them. I haven’t told any one—no one knows at all but Father Austen; and I ran here to tell you the first thing, Mary.” And Catherine’s tone showed that she felt really injured.

“Yes, it’s very nice, and I shall like to help you, Cathy, of course. I didn’t mean that it was not pleasant,” explained Mary; “but, you see, I expected some-

thing so different when you said it was a secret."

"It is a secret. Mamma said she didn't want it spoken about, only I might tell you. I suppose you expected it was something to please yourself, Mary. I never knew you were so selfish—I'm surprised at you!" And Catherine looked cross and flushed.

"I'm not selfish," answered Mary, half crying; "only why couldn't you tell me just what it was, instead of making so much out of it?"

"I wish I hadn't told you at all," said Catherine. "But I won't have you to help me; I'll ask Rose Deane. I thought you'd like to come every day after lessons, and help dress dolls, and make pincushions and needle-books out of all the pieces of silk and velvet and things mamma has put out. Never mind; I'll have Rose. Good-bye, Mary."

But though Catherine tried to speak very coolly, she was ready to cry with vexation at the mere thought of not having her chosen

friend to help her; and she knew that Rose Deane would not do nearly so well, or humour all her whims so patiently as Mary, who very seldom ventured to cross her will in anything. Mary, too, was quite as anxious to make it right with Catherine, and help with the school treat. She was a particularly clever little needle-woman, and she longed to be fingering the bright silks and stuffs which Mrs. Hamilton had turned out of those wonderful drawers of hers, which she and Catherine had been allowed to "tidy" on some special occasion, such as a very wet day, when they could not possibly find anything else to do.

"Well—I'll come," she said, trying not to seem to wish it *too* much.

"No, thank you, I don't care about having you after this," said Catherine; but still she lingered, knowing quite well that she *did* care ever so much, only she wanted to force Mary into her usual docile state.

How long they might have kept up their



foolish tiff I cannot say, if it had depended on Catherine, but Mary could hold out no longer and burst into a most undignified fit of crying.

"Mary! Mary! hush! don't cry!" exclaimed Catherine, hoping very much that no one would hear and come to ask what was amiss, for she felt rather ashamed of the matter now. "Dry your eyes, and don't be so silly. I didn't mean to have Rose, you shall come and help, dear, if you leave off crying."

"You—you—said—I was sel-el-el-fish," sobbed Mary.

"Well, I thought you were, dear, just a little. It seemed so unkind not to be pleased to help the school-children to enjoy themselves, but I know you didn't mean it. There—do leave off crying, Mary; you don't know what a fright you're making yourself."

Mary gave another touch with the pocket-handkerchief to her tear-stained face, and choked back her sobs. That word "fright"

did more to stop the crying than any comfort Catherine could have bestowed; for little neat, orderly Mary had a great dislike to look anything but what was proper and nice.

"Now, we won't quarrel any more," said Catherine. "How silly we've been, haven't we, Mary? Well, come in as soon as you've done lessons, will you, dear, if your mamma doesn't mind; but don't tell *anybody*."

"Mamma will want to know why I come if I ask every day, you see," said Mary.

"Then tell her it's to make some things, only it's a secret, and you can't say any more about it until the time comes."

"When will the time come?" asked Mary.

"Why, the treat is to be on the 18th, but I don't suppose we need keep it a secret as long as that. Mamma said she didn't want it talked about 'just yet;' but I'm quite sure she will let us tell every one very soon, because she knows half the pleasure to us is the talking of it. But it's lesson-time: good-bye, Mary. I'm sorry I made

you cry; but you were very silly, you know."

"Yes," said Mary humbly. "Good-bye, Cathy; I'll be sure and come if mamma will let me."

However, when twelve o'clock came, and Mary Leslie ran over to the Hamiltons' house, and up into the school-room, instead of the array of pieces for work which she expected, she found Catherine sitting over a pile of lesson-books, looking very much out of temper.

"Oh, Cathy!—haven't you done?" said Mary, stopping short in surprise.

"*Done?*—no," answered Catherine in a snappish tone. "I don't know who would be done, with a cross old thing like Miss Meredith for a governess."

"Is she cross?" said Mary innocently. "She looks kind; I like her."

"Oh yes; of course you like her if I don't," replied Cathy, getting still more out of temper. "She can be kind enough when

it suits her, but she is as disagreeable as can be this morning ; a regular old cat."


Mary tittered, although she had a half-consciousness that it was nothing which ought to amuse her; and then she went to the window and drummed on the glass with her fingers, wondering what *she* was to do, if Catherine had her lessons to learn over again.

"Don't make that noise on the window," came angrily from the pile of books. "Get something to do, can't you, Mary?"

"Yes, if you'll tell me what, Cathy. Shall I play with one of the dolls till you're ready, or begin to work?"

Catherine hesitated — to see Mary busy would be very annoying, and yet it was a pity to lose the time doing nothing.

"You'd better cut some cardboard, ready to cover for pincushions," she said at last. "Open the drawer there, and you'll find some ; and take a pair of scissors out of my workbox."



Mary obeyed, and sat down a little way off, cutting hearts, and rounds, and diamonds very nicely, while Catherine bent over her lessons, trying to cool down her temper; but in what seemed a very few minutes, nurse came in to say that Mrs. Hamilton wished her to go up to the nursery and play with Winnie, who did not appear well, and was rather fretful. That was more than Catherine's temper could bear just then. "I haven't finished my lessons," she burst out. "Now I shall be at them all the afternoon, I suppose, and have no time to myself. What a nuisance brothers and sisters are! Horrid little cross thing, she might just as well amuse herself!" And the books were dashed right and left, as she got up from the table, and put her chair into its place as noisily as she could.

"Shall I go?" said Mary, half afraid, for she knew what Catherine's temper could be.

"You?—no. What use would that be? You had better take some silk and card

home and do them this afternoon ; there will be no chance of my helping to-day. Mind you come to-morrow, though." And Mary promised, and, having tied on her hat, ran home again, not sorry to get away.

Meantime Catherine walked very slowly up to the nursery, where she found her mamma looking very tired with Winnie on her lap.

"Cathy, dear, I am sorry to disturb you, but my head aches so badly I cannot stay here just now, and I want some one to amuse Winnie. Get her to play with the doll's house, if you can ; she certainly is not well, but I think she would not feel so poorly if she would get amused." And Mrs. Hamilton kissed Catherine's forehead and went away.

Ah, how that kiss seemed to burn her ! If mamma had wanted to punish her for her passion and unkindness, I do believe she could have chosen nothing so hard to bear as that little gentle kiss which she gave so unconsciously. However, it smoothed

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away the angry frown on Catherine's forehead, and made her voice very gentle as she talked to Winnie; but all the while her heart was aching terribly, for she knew how she had grieved the good God who had seen and heard all, though her mamma had not.

When dinner was over, and Catherine went back to the school-room, the first thing she did was to pick up every book and lay them in an orderly pile on the table, and then sit down and learn each lesson perfectly; and finding it an easy business after all, she felt more than ever ashamed of herself.

A little industry in the morning, and she would neither have vexed her governess, been out of temper over her lessons, or felt so angry and wicked towards her little sister! Now, however sorry she might feel, it was a bad day to look back on.

Then Catherine resolved that, to punish herself, she would not begin any of the preparations for the treat that afternoon. She wanted to *dreadfully!*—there were some

scrap-books to be made, and ever so many more things which would be delightful to set to work on. However, she denied herself the pleasure just as a little offering to Our Lord in reparation for all the pain she had been giving Him—or to “make up” for it, as Catherine said (she didn’t use such a long word as I have done), although she felt as if nothing ever could make up for things which were so very wrong.

Having resolved on this, the little girl went out of the school-room and upstairs to the nursery. She didn’t at all like what she was going to do, but I am glad to say that Cathy had made up her mind not to let that hinder her from carrying out her plan of playing with little Winnie and Cyril all the afternoon. On the landing outside the nursery there was a large figure of the Holy Child—“Gentle Jesus,” the children called it; and for a second Catherine stopped, and, looking at the sweet little face, asked her Lord to help her to be like Him all the rest



of the day ; and then she opened the door and went in.

Not a cheerful prospect, certainly ! Winnie was sitting on nurse's knee, with heavy eyes and a hot face, while Cyril, feeling himself neglected, was crying loudly. That was Catherine's work, then—to amuse the little brother, who was far more difficult to please than Winnie. However, she kept bravely at it, and when the bell rang for her to go down to tea, nurse thanked her, and said she had been “ a real comfort.”

Wasn't Catherine happy then ? Yes ; you little girls who read this know just how it feels when you have done anything kind and patient and unselfish, and so you can guess what a light heart and bright face she carried into the big dining-room, ready to bear all Frank's teasing, and anything else, because she was so full of love to every one.

But Catherine's joy was to receive a sudden check. After Mrs. Hamilton came down from her usual visit to the nursery, when the

two younger children were being undressed, she looked worried; and when it was later, and she came and bent over Catherine in her own little cozy bed, her eyes were full of tears.

“Oh, mamma, what *is* the matter?” cried Cathy, starting up. “Is Winnie ill?—are you frightened about her?”

“Not *frightened*, dear—God will take care of Winnie; but she seems ill, and I have sent for the doctor.”

“Oh dear! oh dear!” said Catherine. “If she dies, mamma, you don’t know how I shall feel. I almost *hated* her this morning when I had to go to the nursery, and I said it was a bother to have brothers and sisters, and that she was a horrid little cross thing. But I was very sorry, mamma, and I tried to be kind afterwards. Is God going to take her away to punish me?”

“I hope not, Catherine; but I am afraid she is going to have an illness, and so you must prepare to be disappointed of the school treat.”

“ Oh, if that is all, mamma, I can bear it, though, of course, I am sorry. What a good thing we haven't told the children ! ”

“ Now, dear, try and go to sleep. I hope you have asked God very humbly to pardon you for your anger to-day.”

“ Yes, mamma, I have, and I tried to be good after ; but I hope He will not let Winnie be ill ; I *couldn't* bear to be punished like that.” And Catherine's last thoughts were so sad that she had uneasy dreams, and woke up with all sorts of fancies and fears running in her head when morning came.



#### CHAPTER IV.

**T**HE sun was shining as brightly as if there was no such thing as sorrow in the world ; and when Catherine Hamilton began to dress she forgot all her sad dreams and fears, and set to work making good resolutions for the day.

“I won’t say a single cross word this morning,” she thought to herself as she dragged on her stockings in a fashion which would have driven nurse to distraction had she been there to see. “Bother the stocking ! what ails it ?” was the next exclamation. “Ah, I’d better have turned them the proper way at first, only I thought this would save trouble.” However, as Catherine was in an

unusually good mood that morning, she *did* turn the much-offending stockings, and found they came right in no time.

She was proceeding very cheerfully with her dressing when nurse came in to help as usual ; but her face was grave and unhappy, so that all Cathy's fears came back into her mind, and she asked directly about Winnie.

"She's very poorly indeed, my dear. You must go quietly down to breakfast when you've said your prayers, and not come to the night nursery at all."

"Why may I not come?" demanded Catherine. "When the little ones have colds or anything you always want me to amuse them in bed. I must come and see Winnie if she is ill."

"You *must not*, Miss Catherine," said nurse firmly. "The doctor has been, and he says you are all to be kept away. Now, my dear, don't go and bring any more sorrow into the house than there is already, by being troublesome. If you'll just mind what is said to

you it will be more help than anything else."

Catherine did not much fancy that very simple way of being helpful; if they had given her something great to do she would not have felt it nearly so hard as just to be told to "mind what was said to her;" but as nurse had disappeared it was useless to grumble, so the little girl knelt down to her prayers.

Somehow she did not feel nearly so sorry for all her sinfulness as she had done the night before, neither was she as much determined to try to do better as she had supposed herself to be when she got out of bed—indeed, for a half-second she had some idea of missing her prayers altogether for that once; but I am glad to tell you she did not yield to that temptation. So she went through the familiar words without thinking much about them until she came to "Bless my papa and mamma, Frank"—and then as she was going to say Winnie's name she

began to cry, for a great fear filled her heart lest God was going to take away that little fair-haired sister whom she had often been unkind to, often pushed from her with angry, impatient words. Then she began to pray in earnest for Winnie and for herself, and that made her feel a great deal better and happier.

It was a sorrowful breakfast. Frank—who was always in such high spirits—ate his bread-and-butter in silence and gulped down his coffee hastily to keep any one from hearing a great sob which he could scarcely hide. Mrs. Hamilton did not come at all, and papa looked very serious and scarcely spoke, and sighed so much over his newspaper that it made Catherine's heart ache.

“Is Winnie very, very ill?” she asked at last.

“Yes, Catherine, she is very ill; the doctor has been twice since last evening, and we are very anxious about her.”

“May I see her, papa?”

“No, my dear—it is some fever, we think,

and of course you will have to be kept apart. Mrs. Leslie will receive you and Cyril, Catherine : and, Frank, I have written to arrange for you to board at school for the next week or two."

Frank looked very disconsolate, and Catherine cried bitterly.

"Oh, papa, don't send me away. I'll be so good ; I won't give any trouble ; I'll wait on myself, indeed, and do anything mamma tells me. Please let me stay."

Mr. Hamilton drew Catherine near him. "If you love us and wish to be a help, my little girl, you will cease crying, and go cheerfully to Mrs. Leslie's because you are told to do so."

Almost the very words nurse had used, and Cathy didn't like them a bit. She—a girl nearly eleven years—to be thought of no use at all excepting to do what she was bid, like a baby ! Her head went down, and she twisted her shoulders in a way people never do when they are quite good-tempered.



"Now, Catherine, are you going to grieve me by being naughty?" asked her papa.

Catherine pouted and spoke not a word.

"Is God pleased with you now?" Mr. Hamilton said, very gravely. "Have you offered Him all your actions and thoughts to-day, and then give Him such as these?"

There was a little stirring of sorrow in the angry heart, and it grew stronger every second; and then Catherine cried, "I will be good, indeed I will; only please let me see mamma for just one minute."

"Certainly you will, dear; mamma is coming to you before you go. Now try and be very good, and pray earnestly for Winnie to get better; and then, please God, we shall soon have you all together again." And Mr. Hamilton kissed his little daughter as he left the room.

Catherine stood still at the window, looking out into the sunshine; but she didn't care for it now. A little before, when she was getting up, it had all seemed so

bright and lovely that she had been thinking what a nice thing it was to be alive ; now all seemed changed, and she felt as if nothing could make her glad any more. As she stood thinking, her mamma came in ; and instead of crying or entreating, Catherine only nestled her head against her, promising to be very good while she was away and to be kind to little Cyril. "You will have Jane with you, Catherine," said Mrs Hamilton ; "but I dare say he will miss nurse, so you must try to make up for her."

"Yes, mamma, I will do all I can ; but there is one thing I want to ask you. I have been so naughty—yesterday, you know, was a dreadful day, and even this morning I have been cross because I had to go away ; and, oh ! Mamma, if I might only go to Father Austen and ask him to hear my confession, I think it would help me to be good at Mrs. Leslie's."

Mrs. Hamilton was not likely to refuse

such a request as that, so Frank left Catherine at the little church as he went to school; and when Jane, with little Cyril, came to fetch her away, she joined them with a lighter heart and happier face, now that she felt sure that God had pardoned her once more, and had poured out more grace upon her, to help her to serve Him better.

“ Oh, Cathy, Cathy, I am *so* glad !” shouted Mary Leslie, tearing down the hall steps to meet her friend before she had fairly reached the door. “ When mamma told me this morning you were coming I felt as if I could jump out of my skin, I did indeed,—only, of course, I’m dreadfully sorry about Winnie,” she added, as she suddenly remembered the cause of the visit.

Catherine received all her friend’s caresses very quietly—she couldn’t get up very high spirits just then.

“ And Cyril too,”—and Mary turned to him, —“ dear, darling Cyril, I’m so glad you’re

come, and I've got such a pretty waggon for you." But here the little boy hid his face in Jane's skirt and cried loudly, because the house was strange and he felt shy and afraid. This was indeed a discouraging beginning!—and when she had taken her visitors to the rooms prepared for them, Mary Leslie ran straight to her mamma, to tell her they had come and how "very, very disappointed" she was.

"I hurried so to make it all pretty, mamma, and I sent Adams to the shop to buy Cyril's waggon with the half-crown grandpapa gave me, and I've put everything in Cathy's room that looked nice—my own favourite pictures and images—and neither of them took any notice at all."


"My dear Mary, do you forget that Cyril is so little he is sure to feel very unhappy at coming amongst strangers? and Catherine, of course, is sad and anxious about Winnie. How could you expect her to be as delighted as you are?"

"I don't believe she is unhappy about Winnie," said Mary, still vexed. "Only yesterday, when Cathy was in one of her tempers, she—" But fortunately the little girl stopped short before she had committed such a great fault as to repeat what Catherine had done.

"I am surprised and ashamed to see you like this, Mary," said Mrs. Leslie severely. "It is plain that you must have been preparing for your friend just to get thanked and praised, not because you wanted to please her and please God."

Mary went very soberly back to Catherine then. Only the day before she had felt herself so much the best child,—*she* never went in such tempers, *she* never said such cross words,—now she felt quite ashamed of herself; and her tone and manner were very quiet as she said, "What shall we do, Cathy? Shall we work for the school treat?"

Catherine shook her head. "There won't be a school treat now, Mary. If Winnie gets better it will be a long while before she is well



enough for mamma to attend to it ; and—if—she dies——” And then the little girl burst into such a fit of crying that Mary was really frightened.

“ She does love Winnie more than I knew. Oh, how unkindly I judged her !” was her first thought; and then she hugged Catherine, and wiped her eyes with her own handkerchief, and said all the comforting things she could think of.

“ Mary, do you remember what a rage I was in when you came yesterday, and how I said dreadful things about Winnie ?”

Mary blushed with shame for herself as she nodded her head gravely.

“ It was so wrong of me,” continued Catherine. “ I do want to conquer my dreadful tempers, but it is very hard. If anything happens to Winnie I shall never be happy again—never.”

“ Oh, but she will get better,” cried Mary. “ God is sure to cure her if we pray hard.”

“ I have been to confession,” Cathy went

on. "Father Austen says he is sure Our Lord has forgiven me; but he says, too, that sometimes God does punish people in a terrible way, even though they are sorry and beg His pardon. I do really think I've got a lesson this time; and if Winnie doesn't die I do not believe I could ever be unkind to her again. Oh, Mary, I wish I was as gentle as you."

Mary blushed still deeper. "Don't! don't!" she cried. "You wouldn't want to be like me if you only knew all. I don't get in a passion, perhaps; but that is because I don't feel angry the same way: but I'm sullen and selfish, and — I often think I'm better than you, Catherine." And Mary drooped her head very low as she made this acknowledgment.

Catherine only kissed her and took her hand. "We ought, both of us, to be a good deal better, I'm sure. Oh, Mary, how we did plan to be very good after our First Communion: and yet this is the end of all our promises, you see."

“Not the end,” said hopeful little Mary. “I’m very naughty, I know; but I shall try, and try, and try, till I get good. Perhaps I might be as holy as one of the saints some day!”

“Oh, Mary!” cried Catherine, “how can you say such things? The saints were so wonderfully good: we can’t ever be like them, you know.”

“No, I don’t ‘know,’” said Mary. “I shall try to be good like the saints; and I don’t believe they were so much better than you and I when they were little girls,—I don’t, indeed.”

Catherine looked almost shocked. “Oh, Mary! have you forgotten all the tales of the saints? Nearly every one that I know of was very, very holy before they were as old as you and I. S. Rose of Lima, now. Mamma has told me about how she loved to do penances when she was as little as Cyril. And then there was S. Imelda—so good before she was seven years old, and—oh, numbers more. I



never, never could be like a saint, I'm sure ; and I don't believe you could either, Mary."

But Mary was in no way discouraged. "I don't care what you say, Cathy. I mean to go on trying always, no matter how often I break down ; and I shall ask God to make me as good as a saint at last. You'd better ask Him too. And now come and see Cyril in the room mamma has made into a nursery for him." And Mary dragged her visitor off up another flight of steps, singing as she went, "S. Catherine she was a maiden mild."


That evening the two little girls were sitting alone in Mary's pretty school-room, for Mr. and Mrs. Leslie were gone out. They had drank tea out of a small set of china, which was a great treat,—somehow the tea had quite a different flavour in those tiny cups ; and now the tray was cleared away, and the workboxes and bright silks and card were brought out ; for, as Mary wisely decided, "there would certainly be a school treat some time, and it was just as well to get

ready." Presently there was a ring at the hall bell.

"Some one for papa; but they won't come in," said Mary. However, they soon heard that the caller *did* come in, and indeed appeared to be coming upstairs to that very room. Catherine turned very white. "Perhaps Winnie is worse; perhaps——" But Mary had rushed out to satisfy herself by looking, and met Father Austen at the top of the stairs.

"Oh, I didn't know; I only thought——" she stammered; but the priest laughed as if he was not at all displeased. "You thought you would see who was coming, I suppose? Well, it was very natural to be curious when you heard some one approaching your own school-room. I came to see Catherine and take an account of her to Mrs. Hamilton before night."

Catherine was pleased to see Father Austen, but she was unusually silent, for as evening drew on she had begun to feel more strange,



and to long more for home and mamma and her own little bed. Mary, however, had not lost her tongue, and presently she said, "Father, is there any harm in trying to be like the saints?"

"Harm? Do you really think there could be any harm in imitating any very holy person, Mary?"

"No; but Catherine said so—that is, I mean, she seemed shocked when I said perhaps I might be as good as a saint some day, and I meant to try."

Father Austen looked inquiringly at the other little face, and Catherine felt that he wanted to understand all they had said.

"I only meant that—oh, I can't quite tell you, Father," she exclaimed. "I am sure it is right to try to be very good; but then the saints were so wonderful; and though I know Mary doesn't get in rages like me, I didn't think——"

"Didn't think she was much like a saint," put in Father Austen.

“Yes,” answered Catherine, looking across at Mary with a glance which seemed to beg her forgiveness for not saying anything more flattering.

“And I dare say you thought it was not quite humble to think she could ever become so very holy—wasn’t that it, Catherine?”

“Well—yes, Father; I really believe it was something like that.”

Then the priest tried to make it quite plain to the little girls that the saints were once children like themselves, with the same tendency to evil in their hearts, with the same struggles to make and battles to fight against their own sinful nature; and they grew to be saints, not by one great action, but by thousands and thousands of little things done faithfully, and the great grace which God gave them, because they asked for it.

“But, Father, some saints seemed all goodness from the time they were little babies,” argued Catherine.

“Yes, it is quite true that many have been

wonderfully free from our faults and passions; but others have committed great sins over and over again, and yet have become very glorious saints afterwards. Remember S. Mary Magdalene—her great love made up for her terrible sinfulness.”

“Then I am right—am I not, Father?” said Mary. “It is quite true that I *could* grow into a saint some day.”

“Yes, Mary — God’s grace will not be wanting; it will be your own fault if you do not become very holy.”

“There, Catherine!” cried Mary triumphantly; “what do you say now?”

“I wish I could be very good; but I can’t — that is all I’ve got to say,” answered Catherine rather sadly.

“Only keep on trying, only trust to Jesus and believe He will help you,” said Father Austen; and then, as he rose to go, he laughingly said he wished the two children could be mixed up together and then divided again: Catherine would have more hope and

trust, while Mary would be the better for a little less self-confidence; and having given them his blessing, the priest went away to see Mrs. Hamilton.

"I think I ought to go and see Cyril now," said Catherine. So the work was put away, and they ran upstairs; just at the right time it seemed, for the poor little boy was crying for his mamma, and nurse, and Jane said "there was no pacifying him."

So Catherine sat down by the little cot and sang to him; and though she felt ready to cry too, she conquered herself, and was soon rewarded by seeing him drop off to sleep. It was not long before her own bedtime came; and though Catherine was convinced she could not sleep at all in a strange room, she found her eyes were not at all inclined to keep open, and after a very few minutes she had forgotten all her troubles; but her last waking thought had been a prayer for Winnie.





## CHAPTER V.

**A** WEEK had gone by, and Mrs. Leslie's little visitors were feeling as happy as they could away from home. Frank too had joined the number—much to his happiness, for he found it a vast improvement on boarding at school. His coming made the house very lively, for he had no end of anecdotes to tell about the few days he had spent at “Old Ashton’s,” as he called his school; of the “stick-jaw pudding” and thick planks of bread-and-butter which seemed such dreadfully bad fare after what he was used to at home.

“And one day there was ‘resurrection pie,’ Cathy,” he said, at the conclusion of his first



long account of the different dinners he had eaten: "that was Saturday, of course."

Catherine opened her eyes widely. "What ever do you mean, Frank? Is that the right name? What kind of pie is it?"

"Oh, the fellows call it 'resurrection pie' because it's made of all the bits and scraps left during the week, dished up again on Saturday with a crust as thick as—my arm," added Frank, determined to find a sufficient comparison when he was about it. "It's horrid stuff: first you fish up a bit of beef, and then a scrap of pork or mutton, and no end of candle grease, and potato and squash of all kinds."

"Did you really eat it, Frank?" asked Mary Leslie with a very disgusted face.

"Eat it!—I believe you. Why, the fellows would eat dead donkey or anything else, they're so jolly hungry! *You'd* eat it fast enough too if you couldn't get anything else, though it doesn't sound pleasant, I confess."

However, both Catherine and Mary declared

that nothing ever could or would persuade them to eat such a concoction as Frank had described to them; and they pitied him very much, and were exceedingly glad Mrs. Leslie had asked him to come and stay until they were able to return to Fairfield.

The work for the school treat was getting on finely, for Cathy's mind was at rest now, as there was good news of Winnie. God had heard all the prayers which were offered for the little girl's life, and though she was still very weak, the doctor said she was out of danger, and that with nursing and a change of air she would soon be well. You may guess how happy Catherine was, how many thanks she gave God and the Blessed Virgin for listening to her prayers, and how firmly she resolved for the future to be a kind, good sister to the little ones. Besides resolving well, I am glad to say that Catherine was trying hard to be very good, and that however much Frank provoked her she managed to control her temper during their visit, while

she was wonderfully kind and patient with little Cyril ; so that Mrs. Leslie sent first-rate reports home, and told Mrs. Hamilton how very much Catherine was improved. This news was one of the greatest pleasures which came to Fairfield during the sad time of Winnie's illness, and often when Mrs. Hamilton was anxious and weary, the knowledge that her little girl was striving to do right and to keep all the promises of amendment she had made, brought a smile to her face and a great joy to her heart.

"Kitty, Kitty, I've got something to tell you!" cried Frank one day when he came in from school.

Now the very name "Kitty" had often roused Catherine's temper, for it had begun first from her brother comparing her to a cat: however, she was learning not to mind such tiny things now, and especially when Frank had news to tell.

"What is it?" she cried. "Are we going home? Does mamma say we may?"

Frank shook his head. "Guess again—it's something better than that."

"Better than going home?—there's nothing better than that."

"Oh, isn't there, though?" said Frank. "It's a precious sight jollier, I can tell you; and you'll say so too when you know. Come, Cathy—guess again."

"Oh, I can't, Frank. How stupid it is of you! How can I possibly know what you have to tell? I dare say it's nothing at all—you're only teasing." And Catherine gave one of the old pouting looks, which had not been seen on her face of late.

"Pretty dear!" cried Frank provokingly. "If there was but a glass here, it should see itself—that it should!"

Just for half a minute it seemed as if one of the violent quarrels they used to have was likely to follow, to judge from Catherine's face—the good and bad angels seemed both near her then; but with a tremendous effort she conquered herself, and only said, "You

might as well tell me, Frank—it isn't kind to tease me so."

"No more it is, old girl," answered Frank, patronisingly. "Why, you'll turn out positively sweet-tempered, and no mistake, if you go on trying. Guess again, my angel."

Oh, how Catherine could have boxed his ears as he stood with that taunting laugh on his face!—but she didn't; she turned away at once, or I fear she could not have kept her angry little hands still.

But Frank thought she meant to go then; and as he was quite as anxious to tell the news as Catherine was to hear it, he hastened to soothe her.

"Look here, Cathy—don't get waxy, now; you've stood my chaff like a brick. I'll tell you the news free, gratis, and for nothing. We—are—all—going—to——where do you think?"

"To the Crystal Palace?" suggested Cathy.

"Pooh!—that wouldn't be much of a treat," said Frank scornfully. "It's some-

where you wanted to go to—I heard you wish for it before Winnie was ill.”

“To Rome?” asked Catherine, who remembered uttering some such wild desire over her lessons one day.

“You goose, you gander, you!”—but suddenly recalling the fact that he was at Mrs. Leslie’s house, and not at school, Frank pulled himself up in the string of unflattering titles he was pouring out. “I said I’d tell you, though, Kitty. Well, we’re all going to the sea—isn’t that jolly?”

“Oh, how delightful! how lovely!” cried Catherine. “To see the sands and the beach, and get seaweed and shells again! Oh, Mary, won’t it be nice?”—and she turned to look for her companion; but Mary was gone, and it was nearly half an hour before Catherine found her, crying disconsolately by herself in a deserted old summer-house down at the end of the big garden.

“Mary, Mary, whatever brought you to this nasty, spidery, earwiggy old place?” she

exclaimed. "And you're crying, too! Have you hurt yourself?"

No answer — only more sobs from Mary.

"Is any one angry with you? Have you got into a scrape?" suggested Catherine, who had not the least idea what was amiss. However, she stood there, fancying all possible and impossible causes for such floods of tears, quite five minutes before Mary sobbed out—

"You're—so—unkind."

"Me unkind! Why, what in the world have I done?" cried Cathy. "Weren't we working as happily as could be till Frank came in?"

"Yes—that's just it," said Mary through her tears.

"But I haven't spoken a single word to you since; I don't know when you went away," answered Catherine, who grew more and more puzzled.

"You don't love me; you don't like being

here—you said it would be better than anything to hear you were going home.”

Catherine drew a long breath—*that* was the secret of the tears, then !

“Well, really, Mary, if you were sent away because some one at home was ill, I think you’d like to go back,” she said at last. “Of course I’m very happy, and you’ve all been good to us; but I can’t say that I shall not be glad to go home, if you cry for everlasting. I think you’re very silly.”

Mary burst into a fresh flood of tears. “You might think of me a little,” she answered. “Don’t you know I’m very dull, with no one to play and work and learn with me?—and when you’re gone it will be so lonely.”

“But it will only be the same as it was before,” argued Catherine. “You knew I wasn’t going to stop for always, Mary, and I’ve been here three weeks now.” However, she put her arm kindly round Mary and tried to cheer her up, though in her heart



she was wondering that her little friend could be so "very, very stupid."

"I'll bring home such lovely seaweed for you, Mary—all dried on a card, like Aunt Adela does it. And shells too—dear pretty little pink and white shells. And then when we're back at Fairfield I'll ask mamma to have you oftener than ever to play with me, because you're so dull."

Mary began to dry her eyes and cheer up then. "You do care about me, don't you, Cathy? You're not glad to go away from me?"

"No, of course not," said Catherine. "I only want to be with mamma again; and you can't wonder at that, Mary. Ah! there's an earwig on me, I declare—here, knock it off, that's a darling. How could you come to this horrid old summer-house?" And then, with their arms twined round each others' necks, the two little girls went towards the house.

"Oh, Catherine—the school treat!" ex-

claimed Mary, stopping short and gazing at her friend.

"I forgot it," said Cathy. "I suppose we shan't have it now; the days are getting too cool, and it wouldn't do for the fields at all. I wonder what mamma will do about it."

But the wonder was set at rest that day, by Mrs. Hamilton sending a little note to Catherine, saying the treat would be given at the school in Christmas week, and that in three days she and Frank and Cyril were to come home. The work was put aside then—there would be plenty of time for that before Christmas, they decided—those three days must be spent in their favourite games and plays. However, though her visitors were leaving so soon, Mary Leslie was not at all unhappy, for another piece of news had come from Fairfield, which was that Mrs. Hamilton wished to take her to the sea—if her mamma would allow her to go—with Catherine. After that there were some important things to arrange, as to which dolls should be taken

and which left at home ; and some autumn frocks had to be made for these their children, who were supposed to have been very ill and were going to the sea for a change ; for Cathy and Mary were very fond of dolls, and had each an amazingly large family : however, they were obliged to content themselves with two apiece to go with them to the sea, and only a very few of their books and other amusements.

You may imagine Catherine's delight when she ran up the hall steps of Fairfield once more ; it seemed more like three months than three weeks since she had felt her mamma's arms round her and had one of those nice talks, which seemed now pleasanter than ever.

"I have tried hard to be good," said Catherine the first night when she and Mrs. Hamilton were alone for a little while. "It has often been hard, mamma, not to be vexed with Mary, or cross if things were not as I wanted them ; but I always said a 'Hail-

Mary' or the prayer to my guardian angel when I was getting angry ; and I really do think I haven't been in one of my passions once."

This was indeed a happiness for Catherine's mother, and she felt sure that Winnie's illness had been a good lesson for her little girl which she would not easily forget.

It was a merry party which started to the sea that misty autumn morning — Mrs. Hamilton, Catherine, Frank, and Mary Leslie in one carriage, and nurse with Winnie wrapped in shawls and Jane with little Cyril in the other ; and a fine bustle there was at the railway terminus, where Mr. Hamilton met them, and made one more to travel down to Bournemouth — where they had decided to go, because it was a mild and healthy place.

If it had not been that they beguiled the distance by a large consumption of sandwiches, tarts, and apples, I think the young folks would have felt the journey long ; but

it really was surprising to see how much bread-and-butter and other good things they could eat for tea when they reached Bournemouth, considering what had been got through in the railway carriage.

What happy days those were ! how the children enjoyed running down to the waves, and watching them sweep in and curl over and break with a dash upon the shingle ! Every run there brought a fresher glow to Winifred's little pale face, and made the strong ones stronger than ever. They made castles and moats ; they took off shoes and stockings to paddle in the water ; they hunted for the few shells which are to be found there, and amused themselves all day ; and then when night came the salt wind had made them all so sleepy that there was no grumbling and murmuring over going to bed, and I think every one was sorry when the time came to be steaming back again, with presents for every one at home as a remembrance of Bournemouth.

But it really was a very strange and a very sad thing that the old temper of former times seemed to lay hold of Catherine almost as soon as she was settled at home once more.

*She* said it was because the weather was wet and dull, and there was no going out, no fun and pleasure, like there was at the sea; but *I* think it really happened because she had been going on well so long that she began to forget the old passion was not dead yet, but wanted a great deal of watchfulness and care still.

The difficulties began with lessons, which seemed more trying than they had ever been; Cathy felt so angry when Miss Meredith told her to sit up, to hold her book straight, or pronounce her words nicely, that she burst into the old exclamations of "Bother!" or answered so rudely that she was constantly getting into disgrace.

Still it was not for several weeks that there was any violent passion; and for all her dis-

obedience and crossness Catherine seemed so very sorry, that her mamma was not prepared to expect a quarrel such as arose between the brother and sister just before Christmas-time.

The preparations for the treat were getting on rapidly then ; Mary Leslie spent all her play-hours either working with Catherine or at home ; and there were boxes full of dressed dolls, picture - books, needle - books, pin-cushions, bags of sweets, and I know not what else to prove how busy the little girls had been for many a week before. But besides playthings there were useful presents too—frocks, pinafores, and petticoats of all sizes and colours ; and unfortunately Frank knew of these, and a bright idea struck him one wet half-holiday of having “a lark,” as he called it, with Catherine.

Mary Leslie was at Fairfield that day, and the two girls were sitting down on the rug in front of the school-room fire before the gas was lighted, talking over all the plans they had in their heads, when suddenly the door

opened, and by the bright blaze they saw a strange figure, oddly dressed, carrying what appeared to be a very small child in its arms. The little girls stared with surprise, but before they could speak they became convinced it was not a child at all, but "Bijou," the spaniel-dog, who began yelping and barking piteously on account of the annoyance of the tight petticoats and frock into which Frank had forced it; while Frank himself, in some of the clothing which had been made for the elder girls, looked the most absurd figure you could possibly imagine.

It was not a very terrible thing to do, certainly; but Catherine never thought of that—she only saw that her boxes had been opened and her treasures turned out; and without any hesitation she rushed at Frank, trying to drag off the unfortunate garments, scolding him angrily all the time. But Frank was not going to be undressed so easily, and a scuffle ensued which roused Catherine to greater anger than ever, and made her turn



round upon poor Bijou, slapping her smartly and pulling off the clothes more roughly than was kind. Frank could stand a great deal himself, but his dog was his especial pet, and when Cathy scolded and beat it he seized his sister and gave her such a shaking that she had scarcely breath to call out for help.

“ You bad boy, you——”

“ How dare you touch my dog, you cat, you vixen——” These were the broken sentences which Mrs. Hamilton heard as she came to the school-room to see what was the matter ! But the two children were making too much noise to hear the opening of the door. The first notice they had that any one was in the room was the grave, displeased voice with which they heard their mamma say, “ Frank — Catherine — what are you doing ? ”

There was silence then—an awful silence ; Mrs. Hamilton looked at the floor littered with clothes, at Mary Leslie in her place on the rug, at the two heated, angry faces ; and then,

as Catherine was about to speak, she hushed her :—"Not a word now, Catherine—I do not wish to hear which is right and which is wrong. I see that both of you must have forgotten you are Christian children. Go to your own room, Frank ; and you to yours, Catherine. I do not wish to see either of you again this evening."

Frank whistled and tried to walk off very coolly, but he was desperately ashamed of himself ; and as for poor Cathy, as she gathered up the scattered clothes and carried them safely back to their proper place, she felt as if her heart would break at the thought of her mamma's displeasure, which she had so well deserved. Never, never in all her life had she gone to rest without the kiss and blessing she prized so much. Did mamma really mean not to see her that night, to keep her miserable and unforgiven for the long, long hours which had to pass till morning ? Yes, Catherine found it was really so : nurse brought her tea into the room, but never

spoke ; after that she returned to put her to bed, still keeping silence ; and there the sorrowful little girl lay crying and listening for the voice and step which did not come at all that night. Ah ! how unhappy she was ! She could see plainly now the folly and the sin of her temper ; and I could not tell you how bitterly she grieved over what she had done : but God knew it all, and I am sure He was ready to pardon her and help her to begin another struggle against this terrible besetting sin.

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## CHAPTER VI.

**C**ATHERINE was glad and sorry when getting-up time came next day: glad, because she wanted to see her mamma and be forgiven; sorry, because she felt rather sheepish and awkward about making her appearance at breakfast. And Frank was in much the same case. He had been resolving to give over teasing Cathy; he had been telling himself it was mean and "unmanly" to provoke and worry a girl; and, besides, he knew that it must be a great fault in the sight of God to rouse her to such fits of passion: so to make all right the first thing, he dawdled about on the stairs waiting for her, and said, "I'm sorry I plagued you,

Kitty; I'm going to give up putting you in a rage."

"And I'm going to try more than ever not to get so angry," answered Catherine; and having sealed the bargain with a kiss, the two children went down to breakfast together; and Mrs. Hamilton, seeing by their faces that peace had been made, was quite ready to forgive them and accept their promises to agree better in future.

"I wonder Mary does not come," Catherine said when lessons were over and she was expecting her companion as usual.

Mrs. Hamilton looked up from her desk, where she was writing letters. "Mary will not be here for several days, Catherine—you must amuse yourself alone."

"Not coming?" cried Catherine in alarm: "why, we have such a deal to do before the treat. How do you know, mamma? Has Mrs. Leslie written, and is Mary ill?"

"No, it is my doing. I sent home a note by Mary last night to say that I wished

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you to do without her for the rest of this week."

Catherine blushed very deeply then: she guessed it all now—that her mamma had chosen this way of punishing her for giving vent to such passion before her friend; and in her heart she thought it was so unkind—so *very, very* unkind—to make her fault known in this way.

"Oh, mamma, then you told Mrs. Leslie," she said reproachfully.

"I did, my dear. But do you suppose she does not hear these things through Mary? I often wonder that Mrs. Leslie is not afraid of your example doing Mary harm."

Though Catherine did not answer a word, she was crimson with vexation and shame: the vexed feelings came from the mere idea of being suspected of doing Mary harm, and the shame was because her mamma had herself told Mrs. Leslie what had happened. She had a very great mind to give up being friends with Mary after this—so, at least, she

thought that first afternoon, as she sat in silence by the school-room fire with her heart full of anger and unhappiness. However, before the week was ended she was quite weary of her solitary play-hours, and longed most earnestly for Mary and Monday to come.

Both the little girls looked shyly at each other when they met, but in five minutes they were all right and very busy cutting out tickets for the children's treat, on which Frank had promised to write the names.

"What are you going to do on Christmas Day, Cathy?" said Mary Leslie.

"Do? Oh, go to church as usual, of course; and then in the evening our aunts and uncles and cousins are coming to dinner. I suppose it will be just the same as last year."

"Except that we can go to Holy Communion," said Mary. "Are you going, Catherine?"

"Yes, I hope so. It wouldn't be a happy Christmas else. Oh dear! how we did want

to go last year! Do you remember, Mary?"

"Yes; it seemed such a long while to wait till we were old enough. Are you going to have a crib?"

"Oh yes; there has been one in the nursery every year as long as I can remember, or Frank either. Shall you hang up your stocking, Mary, on Christmas Eve?"

"No—I used when I was quite little," answered Mary. "I left it off last year, and had a different kind of presents. You never mean to have a stocking again, Catherine! Why, you're older than me."

"Indeed I do—I like to feel for my stocking the first thing, and amuse myself with the presents in it before I get up. It's part of Christmas to me."

"But not this year," said Mary again: "you won't play with your stocking and the presents before you go to Mass, surely, Catherine."

That thought had never crossed Cathy's



mind. "Dear me! I didn't once think of that!" she exclaimed. "I was fancying it would be just what Christmas Day always was, and that I should wake up and drag my stocking off the bed-post, and feel it outside first, and wonder what was in it, and then spend the time till I was dressed in looking at the things. Ah! that's all over now, of course; but I don't mind. I shall have to be thinking that I am going to Mass, and that the dear Holy Child is coming really into my heart this year. Well, I must leave my Christmas stocking till I come home again, or else give it up altogether. Which would you do if you were me, Mary?"

"Oh, I should ask my mamma to give me different sorts of presents. After all, it's something rather babyish to have raisins and figs and little dolls and things stuffed into the leg of a stocking."

"Well—yes—so it is," said Cathy slowly. "I shall take your advice and give it up, Mary. All the same, I'm a little sorry."

But any further conversation was stopped by a loud and long laugh from Frank, who had been for some minutes giggling and choking over the ticket-writing. The girls looked up in surprise, for they had almost forgotten he was there, and Catherine immediately demanded "what he was laughing at."

"At you two, to be sure," said Frank. "Anybody would think you were grown-up young ladies, to hear you talk, instead of two little insignificant animals of nine and eleven."

"I'm more than nine," said Mary Leslie, half crying; "I'm nine and three-quarters and a week over."

"And I'll tell mamma that you laughed at us and called us animals," said Catherine angrily. "You shan't be here with us if you can't behave yourself."

"Don't want to," responded Frank. "If that's all the thanks I get, you may write your school-children's tickets yourself —

there!" And throwing down the pen, he jumped up from his seat and walked off, whistling as he went.

"I don't care," said Catherine. "We'll write the tickets ourselves—shall we, Mary? Suppose we begin at once."

Mary looked a little doubtful—she had not much confidence in her own penmanship: however, she agreed to try, and having put an inkstand between them they set to work immediately.

"I've written two," said Catherine presently, after a dead silence. "How do they look, dear?"

Mary left off her own work to see her friend's performance, but somehow she did not give it the praise which was expected.

"Well, don't sit staring at it like that," said Cathy sharply. "What's the matter with it?"

"It didn't look quite so clear and round as Frank's, Cathy—that's all."

"Oh, if you want it large enough to read

a mile off, of course you wouldn't like it," answered Catherine. "Let me see yours. Oh, Mary! *that* won't do: why, no one could ever read it: the letters are all running away from each other."

"I couldn't help it; I did it as nicely as I could," said Mary. "You'd better do them all, Catherine." And she got up pouting and looked out of the window.

There was silence—all but the scratching and spluttering of Cathy's pen, which was working away at a tremendous rate, but apparently not to her satisfaction, for after a few minutes she rose and tossed all the tickets she had written into the fire.

"Nasty, stupid, tiresome things — they won't do at all!" she exclaimed. "There, Mary, don't be sulky: you wrote yours quite as well as I did, and we both did them very badly. Suppose we do something else now, and I'll persuade Frank to finish them all to-morrow."

"Perhaps he won't," suggested Mary.

"Yes he will. He gets cross and 'huffy,' but he soon makes it up," said Catherine. "I shouldn't love Frank so, though he is my own brother, if he didn't forgive so quickly."

This was a strong hint to Mary, who accordingly came out of the window and asked what they should do ; and after a little argument they ran upstairs, and had ever so many games in the nursery with Winnie and Cyril, which shook all the ill temper out of them.

"I wonder why it is that I never can be quite good a whole day," said Catherine, when Mary was dressing to go home and they were alone together. "I make up my mind when I get up, and I ask God to help me, and I pray to S. Catherine ; and yet I do believe I never go one hour without being disagreeable to somebody."

"But I don't think you're *quite* so cross as you used to be," said Mary. "Good-night, Cathy dear."

That was not very strong praise, and yet it left a happy feeling in Catherine's heart. "Not quite so cross as she used to be;"—well, then, her prayers and resolutions and struggles were *some* use, although, at times, she couldn't feel as if they were. She would try more than ever to be gentle and good now, and surely the Christ-child would come and help her. That was what Cathy begged for when she knelt before the altar on Christmas morning.

At last the long-expected, long-talked-of treat for the school children came off; and though it made eighty or ninety little boys and girls very happy indeed, no one enjoyed it more than Catherine and Mary.

The presents they had prepared were all arranged on two tables, one for the girls and one for the boys. Dolls of all kinds, needle-books, work-bags and pincushions were on the girls' table; while tops and whistles and trumpets, drums, pocket-knives, and bags of marbles showed which was the boys'

part, and then there were pretty statues, rosaries, holy-water fonts, pictures, and prayer-books for both tables. But the tea came first—that was at four o'clock. For a long time before then Mrs. Hamilton and one or two other ladies had been busy cutting immense quantities of bread-and-butter and slices of cake, which were heaped up in dishes; and when all the children were seated, and Father Austen had said grace for them, Frank Hamilton and Catherine, besides Mary Leslie and some other girls, went along the tables, handing the cake to each one in turn, or filling their mugs from the large white jugs of tea. What quantities the boys and girls did eat, to be sure! However, at last they had done, and the mugs and plates were cleared away; and then came the giving of the presents, and after that there was a magic lantern, which delighted most of them, only that one or two of the smallest began to cry because the room was dark. By eight o'clock it was all

over, and every one gone, and for a long while the children talked of that Christmas treat, because it was such an unusual pleasure to happen in their poor little lives. But Catherine missed all the excitement and work of preparing, and felt particularly cross and unamiable for a good many days after. There was nothing special to do or think of. Christmas was gone, and the days seemed flat and tame, and the consequence was she finished the old year by a good deal of snapping and quarrelling, though she avoided getting into one of her serious fits of anger. It was not surprising that Catherine was very unhappy just then; every day showed her fresh faults in herself; every night when she examined her conscience she found so much done to grieve God, so sadly little to please Him, that it often seemed to her as if she was getting worse instead of better. Was it really so? Oh, no; it was because God was good enough to let the little girl find out how evil her own nature was, how un-



able she was to do anything without His grace ; and He was teaching her, too, while she was still a child, that without struggling against sin we can never gain the victory.

But a great trouble was coming over that happy home. When the little Hamiltons ran about the house on New Year's morning, giving papa and mamma and every one their good wishes for the time to come, it never crossed their minds that any sorrow was before them : they supposed the new year would be much as other years had been, all brightness and love, and so very few shadows.


A large party was given at Fairfield that first week in January, and all the children round declared that there never had been quite such a happy evening ; such fun over snap-dragon, such charades, such dancing, such a supper, and then, as a wind-up, so glorious a Christmas tree, with quantities of presents for every one—just what each liked too ! It was the talk of all the young folks

in the neighbourhood for several weeks after, until something else came to put it out of their minds, and make them speak in soft low whispers of the terrible sorrow which had happened to Frank and Catherine Hamilton, and which cast a shadow for a long, long time over poor and rich in that part, who knew and loved the family at Fairfield.





## CHAPTER VII.

OU won't forget, papa? — blue eyes and dark hair," said Catherine, one bright frosty morning, as she stood at the hall-door, watching her papa draw on his gloves and take his seat in the phaeton, which he was going to drive in to Freston.

"Blue hair, Cathy? A novelty, I should think; but I'll try what I can do."

"Papa, don't!" cried Cathy, getting very cross. "You are very unkind to tease me, you know I didn't say that. I said *blue eyes*."

"And *you* know that I never promised a new doll to a little girl who loses her temper for nothing," answered Mr. Hamilton.

Catherine was sorry, then. "Oh, papa, forgive me," she exclaimed. "I ought not to have spoken so; I don't deserve my doll, I know."

"Well, well, Cathy, you shall have it, and you must try and deserve it after. But you make me very sad when I see you so easily put out of temper. I can't think how you are to get through life, my little girl: things will not always be smooth for you, more than for other people; and how will you do, if you can't bear the very least contradiction?"

Cathy looked grave for a minute, and then smiling brightly, she said, "Oh, everything is happy now, papa. I don't want to think that anything hard will come. If I only could cure my temper, I should be the very happiest child in all England, I do believe."

"Well—good-bye, Cathy. Try on, dear, and you will win the day, after all. Now Frank, jump in, for Prince won't stand;" and off they went at a smart pace, the

sound of the horse's feet ringing out in the frosty air long after they were out of sight.

"It's a bore, having to get this doll for Kitty," said Frank to his father, as they dashed along the Freston road. "If you'll go into the shop, I can hold the horse."

The fact was, that Frank Hamilton was not very well pleased at the prospect of a visit to Freston toy-shop, where the old lady lived who would persist in telling him "how he'd grown." Frank had been known in the town all his life, and so, though he was getting a big boy, the people continued to call him "little master," in a way which tried his dignity terribly; so when he proposed that his father should go in to purchase Cathy's doll, Mr. Hamilton guessed the reason, and laughed very heartily. "All right, Frank; I don't mind, but you mark my words. As soon as old Mrs. Parker catches a glimpse of you, she'll come out and tell all the passers-by that she nursed you when you were a baby."

Frank groaned and muttered something very unflattering; and so they drove on, passing every now and then some woman or cottage child, who stopped to curtsy to "the doctor," who had always a smile and kind word for every one in the parish.

As they turned the corner of the road at East End, an old body hobbled out from one of the smallest cottages there, calling after them, at which Mr. Hamilton pulled up directly—much to the vexation of Frank and Prince.

"Well, Mrs. Marsh, what's amiss? The cold weather doesn't suit you, I suppose?"

"Ah, you may well say that, doctor. It was broad daylight this morning before I got a wink of sleep, with the pains in my back. I thought, maybe, I'd see you driving into Freston, and I'd make free to ask you if you couldn't give me a drop of physic as 'd do me good."

Mr. Hamilton considered. "I'll send you something which I think will ease the pain.

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Perhaps my little daughter can make up some warm flannel for you—that will be the best thing. Good-bye, look out for me when I pass to-morrow.”

But Mrs. Marsh was loath to see him go. “Why! that’s Master Frank, isn’t it, doctor? Bless his heart, how he do grow! It seems only the other day you were a little boy no bigger than him.”

Mr. Hamilton hadn’t time for any more talk though, so he cut it short by a touch of the whip to Prince, and in another minute East End and Mrs. Marsh were left behind.

“Old idiot!” grumbled Frank; but his father only laughed.

They were really in Freston at last, rattling up the High Street. It was quite in a bustle, too, for it was market-day: there were droves of cattle, and men shouting after them, and dogs snarling and barking round, and a stream of people going in the direction of the market-place, all talking together loud and fast.



What startled Prince just then neither Frank nor any one else could tell. All he knew afterwards was that suddenly they were whirled along so quickly that all sights and sounds were confused, and even the shouts and cries of the terrified people sounded afar off as the horse dashed through them all, away towards the straggling cottages beyond the town, further than the old park palings ; and then there was a crash, a fall, and a sudden unconsciousness, until the poor boy opened his eyes, to find an old market-woman bathing his head, while another was standing a little aside wringing her hands, and wiping her eyes with her apron.

“He’ll do now, thank God ! Can you get up, young master, do you think ? ”

Frank staggered to his feet, weak, giddy, and stunned by the fall, but otherwise uninjured.

“Thank you, I can walk. I’ve no bones broken. Where’s papa and that brute of a horse ? ”

The women glanced at each other.

"The men have seen to him, sir. Dear, dear! to think of him starting off like that!"

"Is my father hurt? where is he?" said Frank again.

"Yes, he's hurt: they've took him to the 'Swan,'" said the elder woman, and as she watched him limp off towards the principal inn, she shook her head sorrowfully.

"Poor dear young gentleman!—it's little he guesses. Ah, it's a sad day for them, and for us too. What'll be done without Dr. Hamilton, there's no telling."

"Was he quite dead?" asked the other woman.

"Dead?—Yes, as dead as the stone his head must have struck on when he fell. Deary me, he was a good, kind man, was the doctor: it'll be a long day before we see the like of him in these parts."

About half an hour later Frank Hamilton was on his way back to Fairfield. He had

refused to send a messenger, he would not ride, he would not have any company in his miserable walk. It was a bright winter day—not cold for the time of year—yet Frank was shivering, and still he did not hasten, but crept along as slowly as he could, trying to think how he should tell his sorrowful news at home—to his mother, who would be watching for them to return—to Catherine, who would be looking out for her promised doll, and running to ask for it.

Presently Frank came to the river gliding on so softly through the meadows. It brought to his mind old happy summer days, when his favourite amusement was to make a fleet of tiny boats, and set them sailing on the water : now he turned away with a shudder, and sat down on a tree stump to rest a moment.

Meanwhile all was happiness in the home at Fairfield : little Winnie and Cyril were constantly at the nursery window, watching ‘for papa to come,’ and Catherine could

scarcely settle to lessons, work, or play, for thinking of her new doll.

"I expect it will be a real beauty, Miss Meredith," she said to her governess. "I can't think what name I shall give her. Mary Leslie wants me to have it 'Violet.' Should you, if you were me?"

"If I were you, Catherine, I should try to attend to my lessons now and think of the doll afterwards," was the grave reply; whereat the little girl began to wonder very much what sort of child Miss Meredith had been, whether she ever could have cared at all for play, or whether she had quite forgotten the delights of having a new doll. However, a bright idea came into Catherine's mind during her history lesson. She was learning the reign of King Edward III.; and when she read about the siege of Calais, and the six brave men whose lives were saved by the entreaties of Philippa, she felt such a great admiration for the good queen, that she at once resolved to give the new blue-

eyed doll that name—it would be quite different to any of her friends' dolls' names, too!

At last lessons were over, and the books put by, and Catherine went to her music; but every now and then she whirled round on the stool to catch a glimpse of the window, so that she might see her papa returning before any one else did, and run to the door to meet him, for Cathy's heart had been full of sorrow all the morning, because of the sharp, hasty words she had given, when her father joked her. "Dear, kind papa, how could I be so cross?" she said to herself; and then she began to wish more than ever that she was a better-tempered child, not always giving pain to those she loved by her hasty words.

All of a sudden, in one of her glances down the carriage-drive, she saw Frank—walking, too! and so slowly; not looking up at the house, either.

"Mamma, mamma!" she cried, rushing out of the room, and turning over the music

stool in her hurry. "Frank is coming up the drive; but no papa, and no Prince."

"Frank's patience was exhausted, no doubt," said Mrs. Hamilton. "He has left papa to follow when he is ready."

"Lazy boy!" cried Cathy. "How he is crawling along, and how cross he does look!" and she flew to open the door. Then she saw that Frank looked white and ill—not cross.

"Where's mamma?" was all he could say; and the voice was so unlike his own, that even through the half-closed door of the dining-room Mrs. Hamilton could tell something was wrong.

"What has happened, Frank? — Your father, the horse, where are they?" she asked, coming out to the children in the hall.

"We had a spill—that's to say, an accident," said Frank, who felt somehow as if his usual slang was out of place now, and yet it came in naturally. "Prince bolted

with us at Freston, and we were pitched out just beyond Heatherston Park — by the old well. I've come home first, to tell you." Ah! how he had to try to speak pretty cheerfully as he said it—but yet Mrs. Hamilton was not deceived.

"Then your papa is badly hurt, Frank? He is too much injured to come home yet, I suppose?"

"Yes," said Frank; "he couldn't be moved yet from the 'Swan.'"

"I will go—tell them to get the pony-chaise ready at once," said Mrs. Hamilton; and she went upstairs to prepare for her drive, with Catherine clinging to her.

"Oh, mamma, take me too! Dear, dear, papa!—I want to see him. Mamma, if you don't let me go I shall break my heart. I was so cross to him this morning, and I want to help nurse him, and show him how I love him."

"Cathy, if you love me and your papa you will stay quietly at home with the little ones. You could not possibly be any use, and the

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best proof you can give of your affection is to be unselfish, and do what I wish. Don't ask me to take you, dear: it will be a comfort to me to know you are helping take care of Winnie and Cyril."

Cathy was half inclined to renew her entreaties, and complain that it was very hard, but she conquered herself, and followed her mamma to the hall door without another word or sob.

"Is there anything we need take?" said Mrs. Hamilton. "I suppose they have all that is needed at the 'Swan?'"

"Yes, yes," replied Frank, nervously. "Come on, mamma."

Catherine pressed closer. "You will come home soon, mamma? You will give my dear love to papa, and tell him I'll never, never grieve him again by my temper. Oh, do send me a message, mamma."

"I will, darling, please God there may be nothing very serious the matter. You are my own dear child now, trying to be a com-



fort to me by conquering yourself;" and with a hurried kiss Mrs. Hamilton left the children and stepped into the little pony carriage, which Frank could drive quite easily.

Neither spoke for a long while as the Welsh pony trotted steadily along the road towards Freston, past East End and the cottages there, up hill and down hill, until they were nearly at the market town. All this time Frank was wondering what he should do—whether tell his mother the whole truth now, or wait until they reached the inn; and he was still puzzling over the question when they turned into Freston and drove up the High Street. People were talking earnestly together in little groups, blinds were drawn down, shutters closed, and the little town looked so unusually quiet, that at last Mrs. Hamilton observed it.

"I never saw the place so dreary," she exclaimed. "I really think some one particular must be dead, Frank, for so many blinds are drawn down in the principal houses. I

wonder,"—but she was stopped by the look of agony on her boy's face, and then she guessed the truth.

"Oh, Frank, I see it all now! He is dead, and you would not tell me," she moaned.

"Mamma—don't reproach me—I didn't know what was best. I could not tell;" and Frank's voice failed him.

"I know, dear—you did it for the best—perhaps it was—I can hardly tell"—said Mrs. Hamilton, in short, gasping sentences. "Pray, Frank, pray earnestly to God for me—for him—for the little ones—and poor Cathy."

When Mrs. Hamilton and Frank were quite out of sight, Catherine went back to the room where she had been practising. She shut the piano, she put away her music, and then stood by the window for a minute or two, thinking how changed and sad everything was in a little while. The clock struck. Last time she heard it she had felt very glad, because she thought her papa and the new

doll would soon arrive—she never guessed at anything so dreadful happening as this. Papa hurt too much to come home—mamma gone to nurse him—Frank with them—and she left behind, with the bitter memory of those cross words to make her still more wretched!

Presently, however, she cheered up a little. Papa was a doctor; of course he would know what would cure him, and he would soon get well again; no doubt he was better already—perhaps on the way home; and then she would fondle and kiss him, and tell him how much she loved him; and very likely he would lie on the sofa and take his tea, and she should carry it to him, and hear him call her his own dear little daughter. It was such a pleasant picture to her fancy, that Cathy forgot all her sadness, and skipped downstairs to tell the cook to have something very nice for papa when he came home; but, to her astonishment, Dennie was in tears, and the other servants were stand-

ing, talking in low whispers, which ceased directly the child appeared.

"They may come quite soon, you see, Dennie," she said, after she had explained her errand. "You'll make something very, very nice, won't you, for papa?"

"I'll make all that's wanting, my dear," said the old servant, through her tears. "There, go upstairs, Miss Cathy, and say a prayer to the blessed Virgin for your poor papa."

"Yes, Dennie; but there's nothing to cry for. Papa couldn't be hurt much more than Frank, and you see *he* was able to walk home. I daresay they'll all be here soon, and I'm going to be such a capital little nurse;" and Cathy went singing upstairs to the nursery. The news had reached Fairfield by then, and as the servants heard the child talking so unconsciously, they could hardly answer her.

"Poor dear! she'll be well-nigh broken-hearted when she knows," said Dennie.

“Who’s to tell her, I wonder? It oughtn’t to be left for the missis, when she comes home.”

“Father Austen — he’d know best,” suggested one of the others; and accordingly a messenger ran to the priest’s house, to tell him the news, and beg him to come to Fairfield, but they found him gone; for Frank had been first to the church, and Father Austen had reached Freston before Mrs. Hamilton.

Long, long after did Catherine remember the merry games they had in the nursery that afternoon. She felt as if the little ones were her especial charge during her mamma’s absence, and so set herself to the task of making them as happy as could be with their favourite plays; and when they grew tired, they sat down before the fire, roasting chestnuts, while old nurse sat in her rocking-chair, whispering Hail Marys, with the tears rolling down her cheeks, for the soul of her dead master, whose little children were listening and longing for him to come home.

“And now I’ll go and smooth my hair and ‘tidy,’ for surely, nurse, they will be coming almost directly.” The words were scarcely out of her lips when the hall bell rang, and without stopping to hear nurse’s entreaties to her to remain in the nursery, Catherine flew down to the next landing, to listen eagerly who it was. “Why, it’s Father Austen!” she exclaimed, and then she rushed down the remaining flight of stairs to the hall, meaning to pour out all her news at once; but something in the priest’s look awed her, as he said,—

“I have come from Freston. I know all that has happened, Catherine. Come into the dining-room with me, for I have something to tell you.”





## CHAPTER VIII.

**T**HE many questions which were uppermost in her mind died on poor little Cathy's tongue as she followed Father Austen into the room, and stood by his side, waiting for him to speak to her. All sorts of thoughts came — that papa was worse — that they weren't coming home that night — that he had even received the last Sacraments — but it never once struck her that he was *dead*, that never more while her life lasted was she to feel his kiss on her forehead, or his kind arm round her as he would say, "God bless my little Cathy!"

With gentle, careful words, Father Austen made her understand the truth at last. He



knew her warm heart and excitable nature, so he was not surprised at the storm of grief which she gave way to—at the bitter cry, “Oh, how cruel! how cruel of God to let my papa die!”

For a time the priest let her cry on, but at last he bid her get up from where she had flung herself on the floor in her first burst of grief, and come and listen to him.

“Oh, father! let me cry. I *must* cry. You don’t know how I loved papa, how I want him! You don’t know that I was cross the very last thing before he started; and now I shall never see him again, never tell him how good I will be. O dear! O dear!” sobbed Catherine.

“My poor little girl, I understand it all. I know it is a great sorrow to fall on you, and it is your first. But think of your mamma, my child—think what it is for her, and how she will need good, unselfish, loving children, to be a comfort to her.”

Catherine grew a little quieter then, and

presently she said, "Will it grieve mamma to see me cry, father?"

"Not to see you *cry*—she will not be surprised at your tears, Catherine. But to cry, and to fling yourself down in such violent grief as that, are different things. Besides, I am quite certain nothing would give your mamma so much pain as to hear you call our good God cruel and unkind."

"Does she think it good of God to let papa be killed?" asked Cathy.

"Do you remember when our blessed Lord was on the earth, just before His bitter passion, He was kneeling in prayer in the garden of Gethsemane? I suppose no one in this world can ever guess how terribly He suffered, Catherine; how desolate He was in His agony; how His sacred Heart was torn with grief. And yet He did not complain. He only cried to God, 'Not My will, but Thine be done.'"

There was a pause. "Do you know what Jesus meant to teach us then, Catherine?"

It was that when we too are in bitter sorrow and suffering, we may try to echo that beautiful prayer, and accept it because it is God's will."

"Does mamma do that, then, father?" said Catherine.

"She is trying, my child; she is asking God to help her say those words from her heart. Will you not try, too? Will you not ask our dear Lord, by the memory of His bitter agony in the garden, to help you to take your cross and bear it for His sake?"

Then Catherine slipped down on her knees before the priest. "I will try, I will pray. Please, Father Austen, bless me."

Not many minutes after there was a sound of carriage-wheels coming towards the house, and, instead of running to the door with her usual eagerness, Catherine hung back, pale and frightened.

"Is it—him—papa—being brought here?" she asked, but Father Austen said that it

was only her mamma and Frank ; and, holding out his hand, he drew her into the hall to meet them.

No one who had seen Catherine a little while before, crying and sobbing on the ground, would have thought it the same child now, who went so softly forward, and slipped her little hand into her mamma's, without a word or a sound. It was the sweetest welcome, the strongest proof of her love and sorrow which she could have given, for Mrs. Hamilton knew how much Catherine must be trying to overcome herself ; and clasping her in her arms, she said, " My darling—God bless you ! I know you will be a comfort to me."

Those were sorrowful days which followed—the house so still, the little ones so hushed and afraid. Then came the funeral—the requiem Mass in the church—the long procession winding up the road to the cemetery, followed by numbers of the poor who had known and loved the doctor ; and

Catherine cried nearly all that sad day, feeling as if she should never be the same little girl any more—never want to laugh or play, or do anything pleasant again.

She used to think that if only she had seen her papa just once more it would have been easier to bear; it seemed so terrible to look at him lying cold and white and still, and know she could do nothing for him but offer prayers to God for his soul.

The house had been open again for several days. Little Winnie and Cyril had begun to play as merrily as ever: to them it was rather fun to see all their frocks folded up and laid by, and have their black clothes put on. At last Catherine's friend Mary came to see her after this, their longest separation.

"Oh, Cathy, I am so sorry!" said Mary. "I would have come to tell you so, only mamma said you wouldn't want me, and, indeed, I felt half afraid to see you when *you* were so unhappy;" and Catherine's

tears began to flow so fast that her little visitor was quite distressed. "Oh, I've made you cry, and I only wanted to be some good," she exclaimed.

"It isn't because of what you said, Mary," explained Catherine. "It's because I was thinking of the last time you were here, and everything was happy. Oh, Mary, isn't it a dreadful thing for papa to die like that?"

"Mamma says that he was so good, that there is nothing to be *afraid* of in Mr. Hamilton's dying all in a minute," answered Mary.

"No; I didn't mean that I was afraid in that way; though, of course, it must be happier and better for every one to receive the Sacraments before they die. I meant that it was dreadful to have one's papa drive off like that, so well and strong in the morning, and never come home alive again."

Mary assented, and then sat silently, giving Catherine's hand many loving little squeezes, to remind her she was there.

Presently Cathy spoke again. "Mary, I want to tell you something, and yet I don't want. It's something which I keep thinking about nearly all day, and at night I often cry about it when they fancy I'm asleep."

Mary waited in great expectation and surprise.

"It was that morning, that last morning," continued Catherine, her voice faltering very much. "Papa was going to get me a new doll. Oh, Mary, I was so happy, and I'd settled to call it Philippa, too, after Edward III.'s good queen, you know. Well, I wanted it to have blue eyes and dark hair; and poor papa teased me, and said I wanted blue *hair*, and I got cross and spoke so angrily; and that was the last time I saw him alive, Mary."

"Did he go away vexed with you, then?" asked Mary, looking very serious.

"Oh, no, no!" exclaimed Catherine. "If he had, I think my heart would quite break. *I told him* I was sorry, the very minute he

looked grieved, and he was so kind. Ah! I remember just how his face turned towards me, and he said, if I kept trying to be good I should 'win the day at last.' Those were the words he said, and then he touched up Prince, and they drove off."

"Well, but then, why do you cry?" asked Mary. "Mr. Hamilton wasn't angry."

"No; but I had made him sorry, and perhaps he was thinking about my naughtiness the very last thing."

"I don't believe it," answered Mary. "If he forgave you, and said that, he couldn't have had any thoughts about your being naughty—he forgave you *quite*, of course."

Catherine drew a sigh of relief. It certainly was a little comfort to hear Mary's view of her sorrow; but for all that *she* could not forgive herself, even if it was indeed true, as she hoped and believed, that God had pardoned her for her hasty temper and cross words.

"I think I've got a lesson this time, really,



Mary," Cathy went on to say. "I've thought so many times, when Winnie was ill, particularly, but this seems different; as if I shall always think of papa every time I'm angry."

But Mary was getting a little weary of such grave talk. "Don't you play at anything now, Cathy?" she asked; and Catherine answered that she had not cared for any games since her trouble came. However, Mary coaxed her to get out the neglected dolls, and she found that, in spite of her sorrowful thoughts, it certainly was pleasant to have some amusement again.

When Mary Leslie went back to her home, she could not forget the change she noticed in her friends at Fairfield. "Do you know, mamma," she said, "Cathy never squabbled with me the whole day; and instead of doing what she liked best, she nearly always asked me to choose. And Frank and her never teased each other, either—just fancy, mamma! Indeed, they all seemed trying to be

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kind, even down to little Winnie and Cyril. Do you think that they'll keep on? or will they torment each other just the same when they've left off being quite so sad?"

"Indeed, I hope they will 'keep on,' as you call it, Mary. God has been speaking to poor Cathy's heart, and He has taught her in a very painful way the misery which a sharp word or angry look may cause us when it is too late. I am sure she has been trying to conquer herself for a long time. Perhaps it was this one great sorrow which was wanting to help her gain the victory."

Mary thought over it a great deal by herself, and she watched Catherine closely when they were together; and as weeks passed by and months went on, she was convinced that the change in her friend was a real and lasting one, for though she gradually got back her usual cheerfulness, she was never again the same impatient, angry child. I do not say that cross answers *never* rose to her lips, that her cheek never flushed with passion

under some of Frank's jokes, or that she was never vexed at being thwarted and contradicted. As long as she lives, Catherine will always feel what an evil nature she has within her; but she is learning that it can, and must, be curbed by God's grace. So, though she was still weak and full of faults, Cathy's temper was strangely subdued from the time of her first great grief, and she never again gave up the struggle which she had bound herself, with so many tears and promises to God, to undertake.

So it came about after a time that at Fairfield one of the children is the mother's greatest help and comfort, one is always ready to give up self; there is one to whom the others turn in any little sorrow or difficulty, and who is ever the first to make peace in any dispute.

And this is Catherine—our faulty, troublesome, passionate little Catherine, whom we have seen often in disgrace, often falling, often resolving, and grieving over her sins.

And if you asked her how it was she was so changed, so different, I think she would want to lead you to a quiet spot where there is a little stone cross, which casts its shadow over her father's grave; and large tears would steal down her cheeks as she told you, that if ever she is tempted to be angry, to say words which give pain and regret, one thought of that spot will check her, and send her to the foot of her little crucifix, to renew her promises and prayers to God. Sweet spring flowers are laid there in their freshness,—bright roses and pure lilies, autumn blossoms and winter evergreens, in their turn—by Catherine's loving fingers; but no flowers can cover the memory which rests ever in her heart of a look and hasty answer which she can never cease to regret. But she is not hopeless now: she tries to bear the pain and love it, if so she can love our Lord more, and follow Him, clasping her little cross tightly to her.

And thus we must leave her, still in

her happy home, still with so many to love her, although that happiness and love has been a little clouded. Perhaps when she is in fresh places, with new trials and temptations, new thoughts and interests all around her, we may see Catherine Hamilton again.











